

## **MINUTES**

### **TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**6 February 2012**

#### **I. ROLL CALL**

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 3:05 PM on Monday, 6 February 2012. Those members in attendance were Mr. Ward Bucher, Chairperson; Mrs. Marsha Kacher, Mr. Robert Amdur and Mr. Ron B. Mitchell. Ms. Alice Marie Gravely and Ms. Peggy Pickall were not in attendance. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball. Also attending was Ms. Mary Kay Verdery, Assistant Planning Officer.

#### **II. CURRENT BUSINESS**

- A. REVIEW MINUTES OF 9 January 2012 TCHPC MEETING – The minutes of the last meeting were read. One amendment was suggested by Mrs. Marsha Kacher and was so noted by Ms. Florence Ball. A motion was then made by Mrs. Kacher to approve the minutes as amended, was seconded and unanimously carried.
- B. LETTER FOR SAMPLE SURVEY –After reviewing the draft letter, the Commissioners pondered what might urge recipients to apply for an Historic District Overlay (HDO). Mr. Ron Mitchell suggested including language and providing a format that would induce recipients to respond with what they would like an HDO to offer. Mrs. Marsha Kacher questioned the statement about historic properties holding their value during tough economic times. She felt TCHPC should have documented proof to support that claim before making that statement. Mr. Ron Mitchell said he would like to read it over again and think about what was discussed before attempting to revise the letter. Further discussion regarding the letter was tabled until the next meeting.
- C. MILLER'S HOUSE IN WYE MILLS (T-70) – Mr. Ron Mitchell reported that the emergency structural stabilization work at the Miller's House is still underway. He said the workers will begin taking down the center brick wall and removing loose bricks from the fireplaces that have collapsed and stabilizing them. He revealed that 30-35 stumps are being ground and trees are being trimmed and pruned as part of the site work. It was emphasized that the work being done at this time is emergency stabilization only.

Mr. Ron Mitchell mentioned that some neighboring outbuildings encroach on the Miller's House property, as revealed by the recent survey. Mr. Martin Sokolich said he spoke to the Code Enforcement Officer who inspected those structures, and it was determined that the buildings in question were erected many years ago, possibly before the County required permits for outbuildings, and they are considered simply as nonconforming structures. However, if the structures were to be replaced in the future, they would be required to be moved to occupy the property on which they belong, and would need to comply with the current code. The Commissioners expressed concerns that these structures might have negative impacts on the historic resource; particularly the cemetery. Mr. Sokolich said if it is determined that one of the encroaching structures

is contributing to any sort of damage to an historic resource, or imposing a threat of future damage, it is possible that the owner of the building may be required to provide a reasonable remedy. Mr. Mitchell suggested putting information about the Mill and the Miller's House on the internet to publicize it.

- D. STATUS OF TCHPC COLUMN IN SHORE LIFE MAGAZINE – The Commissioners reviewed the first draft of the article on Beverly (T-240) authored by Ms. Alice Marie Gravely. It was discussed that the article needs to be trimmed down to 600 words or less, and some of the Commissioners felt the article should be more “lively” and have more dialogue instead of providing so much history. Mrs. Marsha Kacher will call Ms. Alice Marie Gravely to discuss possible changes to the style and tone of the article.
- E. TRAINING SESSIONS FOR TCHPC COMMISSIONERS, AND EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS – Mr. Martin Sokolich spoke about the educational requirements for a Certified Local Government (CLG) Commission. He distributed a hand-out from Preservation Maryland regarding an upcoming Restoration and Renovation Fair; saying he was not certain whether attending this fair would count toward the required education credits, but that it might be worthwhile to attend. Mr. Ward Bucher urged all the Commissioners to study the Secretary of the Interior Standards so they are more thoroughly familiar with it. Mr. Bucher felt it would be helpful to have a speaker come to address TCHPC on relevant topics. Mr. Martin Sokolich said he will contact Elizabeth Beckley (Preservation Maryland) to see what arrangements could be made.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. SITE VISITS – Jena (T-163) was visited on January 23. Mr. Martin Sokolich asked if one of the arched windows is recent. Mr. Ward Bucher said it probably was installed in the 1960's. Ms. Florence Ball suggested checking photographs in the Jena file to see if it can be determined how long that window has been in place. Mr. Ward Bucher said he will write a follow-up letter to the owner.

Mr. Robert Amdur reminded the Commissioners that there will be no site visits in February and March, but meanwhile, he will work on scheduling the next site visit in April at Knox, also known as “Old Judith's Garden,” (T-172).

- B. PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT TO HISTORIC REHABILITATION OVERLAY DISTRICT LEGISLATION (*§190-109 OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE*) – Ms. Mary Kay Verdery addressed the Commissioners regarding proposed changes to current legislation which enables property owners who wish to preserve/rehabilitate an historic structure/property to use the property creatively for a use other than what would normally be permitted in that particular zoning district. The proposed change to this legislation would be to have §190-109 apply only to historic resources located outside of the Critical Area that are either already within an Historic District Overlay or have applied for designation as an Historic District Overlay, and provided they meet all of the requirements of this section and are in compliance of same, they would not require the County Council to approve a request for rezoning to the Historic Rehabilitation Overlay District. Ms. Mary Kay Verdery explained that the

amendment is needed to eliminate the duplicative processes that apply to historic resources in the Critical Area as the legislation is currently written. She advised that the Critical Area growth allocation process accomplishes the same result as the HRO (§190-109) process. She further explained that growth allocation is required to intensify use of Critical Area properties; therefore, the HRO process is redundant for those properties located in the Critical Area.

The Commissioners asked if they would still be involved in the review process when a property owner with an historic resource located in the Critical Area applies for growth allocation. Ms. Mary Kay Verdery assured them that they would be part of the review process for those applicants who already have an Historic District Overlay on their properties. For those who do not have an HDO, TCHPC will be notified as a courtesy, and allowed to provide comments as part of the review process.

#### **IV. OPEN FLOOR**

- A. LANDMARKS LIST SURVEY WORK – Mr. Ward Bucher felt it is time to resume the “windshield surveys” which had been postponed due to the corn being too high to see the structures from the road, and possible impending bad weather. Mr. Robert Amdur said he felt the drive-bys are a “waste of time” because most of the structures are set back from the road too far to determine the condition of the historic resource. Mrs. Marsha Kacher responded to his comment by reminding him that the objective is to determine if the structures in question are still standing, and are therefore worthy of being on the Landmarks List.
- B. NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF HISTORIC DISTRICTS – Mr. Martin Sokolich announced that TCHPC has been enrolled with the National Alliance of Historic Districts, and he distributed one of their publications.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 5 March 2012, at 3:00 pm in Conference Room One of the Talbot County Office Building at 215 Bay Street in Easton.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:15 pm.

8 February 2012